

# THE BEST OF THE BEST

A BIOGRAPHY ABOUT  
BASKETBALL... AND LIFE!

FRED HARE  
WITH  
CORD G. COSLOR

***CDE***  
**PUBLISHING**

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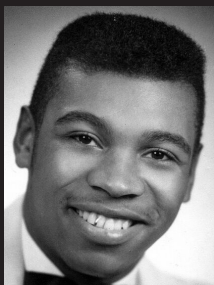
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*To all those that enjoy  
watching or playing  
basketball...  
or any other sport!*

*Also to all those that enjoy life,  
no matter what hand of cards  
they have been dealt.*

*Fred Horne*  
*Paul J. Bobb*

# ABOUT THE AUTHORS



**FRED HARE** IS CONSIDERED ONE OF THE GREATEST BASKETBALL PLAYERS TO HAIL FROM THE STATE OF NEBRASKA. LEADING AN OMAHA (NEBR.) TEC HIGH SCHOOL TEAM TO THE 1963 STATE CHAMPIONSHIP THAT WOULD ALSO BE CALLED ONE OF THE BEST TEAMS OF ALL TIME, HARE PUT HIMSELF ON THE BASKETBALL MAP... BREAKING RECORDS ALONG THE WAY. AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA, HARE IS MOST WELL-KNOWN FOR A BEHIND-THE-HEAD BUZZER SHOT THAT WOULD BEAT CAZZIE RUSSELL'S MICHIGAN TEAM AT THE BUZZER. LEAVING SCHOOL AMID CONTROVERSY, HARE CONTINUED HIS PROFESSIONAL AND SEMI-PROFESSIONAL BASKETBALL CAREER FOR YEARS TO COME. SINCE HIS PLAYING DAYS, HARE HAS RESIDED BACK IN NEBRASKA, COLORADO, MEXICO AND CURRENTLY MAKES HIS HOME IN TEXAS HE WAS A MEMBER OF THE INITIAL INDUCTION CLASSES OF THE NEBRASKA HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS HALL OF FAME IN 1999 AND THE NEBRASKA BLACK SPORTS HALL OF FAME IN 2006.

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**CORD COSLOR**, IS AN AUTOGRAPH COLLECTOR OF 20 YEARS AND RESIDES IN PORT CHARLOTTE, FL. A NATIVE OF MINDEN, NEBRASKA, AND A LONGTIME SPORTS ENTHUSIAST, COSLOR IS A FORMER COLLEGIATE FOOTBALL AND BASEBALL PLAYER AT STERLING COLLEGE (KS.) AND PERU STATE COLLEGE IN NEBRASKA, WHERE HE RECEIVED A DEGREE IN SPORTS MANAGEMENT AND MARKETING. COSLOR ENJOYS WRITING ABOUT AND RESEARCHING ALL ASPECTS OF NEBRASKA-RELATED SPORTS, AND HAS ACCUMULATED ONE OF THE LARGEST AUTOGRAPH COLLECTIONS IN THE UNITED STATES. HE HAS CONTRIBUTED TO SEVERAL BOOKS, MAGAZINE & NEWSPAPER ARTICLES, AND IS ALSO THE AUTHOR OF THE ULTIMATE CELEBRITY ADDRESS & PHONE BOOK. COSLOR ALSO WAS THE PUBLISHER OF THE ARCHIVE NEWS AUTOGRAPH COLLECTING / CELEBRITY INTERVIEW MAGAZINE, AND IS THE FOUNDER OF CELEBRITY DIRECT ENTERTAINMENT, AN ENTERTAINMENT MANAGEMENT COMPANY AND BOOKING AGENCY WITH OFFICES IN FLORIDA, MARYLAND, AND CALIFORNIA. IN HIS SPARE TIME CORD ENJOYS UMPIRING HIGH SCHOOL, COLLEGIATE, AND PROFESSIONAL BASEBALL GAMES.

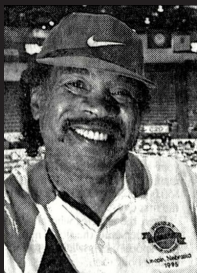


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"I've been able to achieve what many may say wasn't possible. But I could never say I've accomplished more than I've ever dreamed. Because I have always DREAMED of doing more. I've dreamed of the perfect basketball game, the perfect life. I can't say that I've achieved either... but I've dreamed and tried. I've had my ups and downs, and I've won and lost battles. This is my story. That's all it is."

*Fred Hare*

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# ***AUTHOR'S NOTES***

Many called him "Fabulous." Others nicknamed him "The Rabbit." On the following pages, Fred Hare tells his story -- from the heart. From Arkansas, and then Missouri... Freddie ended up in Omaha, Nebraska where he clearly made a mark for himself in the history of Nebraska basketball at Omaha Tech. He would go on to excel at the University of Nebraska, bringing controversy with him.

Leaving Nebraska early, many since that time have asked the question, "Whatever happened to FredHare?"

In this book, Fred will tell you in his words about his upbringing, his time at Omaha Technical High School, and of his time at the University of Nebraska. He will then tell you about his globe-trotting years spent in various countries with various professional teams.

You'll then learn what he's been doing since his ball playing days. His ups and downs. His trials and tribulations... and how he has overcome all of it.

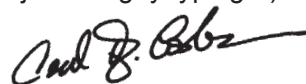
You will finally have that answer -- you'll know 'what has happened to Fabulous Freddie Hare.'

I must say that this book is the culmination of work, writings, and research that started no later than 1985. I first met Fred while I was still in high school at Minden, Nebraska, in 1992. This project had already been started long before then.

I was a fan - searching high and low for Nebraska-native professional athletes. Thanks to Jerry Mathers I first became aware of Fred Hare. Thanks to some sleuthing talent, I found Fred Hare, who happened to be back in Omaha when I started the search. Thanks to Johnny Rodgers, I found Fred Hare when I lost touch with him somewhere around 1996. I've been in touch with Fred uninterrupted since then. I consider Fred Hare a friend. I find his story amazing -- at times sad, at times triumphant -- but always amazing.

I officially re-started his autobiography project in 2005. A couple of computer crashes and many time restraints later, this project is finally done. I owed that much to Fred Hare for being my friend and believing in me for so many years. I know this book, and you reading this book, will put a much deserved smile on his face. I hope it does the same for you. Fred knows his fans from yesteryear are the best that ever lived. Sure, some doubted him over the years. But I think deep-down Fred believes he owed this book to all of you. Maybe to answer some of your questions.... maybe to raise new questions. Definitely to say 'thank you' for making him the person he is.

This is Fred Hare's story, in his words. I'm just the guy typing :-)



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# **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

WITHOUT THE FOLLOWING, THIS BOOK WOULD NEVER HAVE BEEN POSSIBLE.  
IN NO PARTICULAR ORDER, WE'D LIKE TO THANK:

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Nebraska Black Sports Hall of Fame  
Nebraska High School Sports Hall of Fame  
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Omaha World Herald  
Ora Prince  
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Doc Sadler  
Hiram Sturges  
University of Nebraska-Lincoln  
Dennis Watson

**AND, OF COURSE TO THE MANY PEOPLE THAT WE FORGOT TO MENTION!**

# **1 - THE EARLY YEARS**

Many folks throughout the country know of some of my basketball accolades. That's a fact. But I believe the makeup of a man is created by so much more than what he did on the basketball court. How many of you know that nearly all of my family was murdered by an intentionally set fire when we were young? Probably not many. But I feel things like that, and just general information about my childhood, are important for you to get to know me a little better.

I was born in the State of Arkansas on June 20, 1944, and as stated on my birth certificate, my given name is Freddie Lee Hare. I was born to James and Geneter Hare. Everyone called my mother Gen for short. I don't recall anything about Arkansas and I've never returned since my birth. I guess I never had any desire to return. I had always heard negatives things about Arkansas. Probably most of what I heard wasn't true. Who knows... maybe I'll head back there one day.

I guess my memory goes back to age 5 or 6 when we were living in Libron, Missouri. What I remember first is the horrible house fire. Not just a memory, but probably more of a haunting. It took the lives of three of my brothers. I lost two younger brothers, Cornelius and Robert, and an older brother, Stephen.

In this book I hope to recount the events of my life from that tragic fire up to today.

I do remember that we were all good God-fearing and extremely mannerable children at that time. I was told by my Aunt Lilly that Mom, her sister, had a set of twins and triplets and I had a sister named Gertrude. My Aunt Lillie carried the family history for so many decades, until she passed away several years ago.

I can remember at that time there were seven of us: Frank, James, Stephen, Robert, Cornelius, Clarence and myself. I didn't know Clarence when I was younger. It turns out that he left home when he was 9 years old, and that he was my father's son from a previous marriage. I was 10 or 11 before I met Clarence. Gosh, I love him so much.... I loved all of my brothers so much! I used to think I loved them more than they could ever love me. Well, Ste Bo (that's what we called Stephen) and Clarence probably had mutual feelings for me.

It was difficult to learn about my family history, as my mother wouldn't talk about it much. Aunt Lillie gave me some of the details as I got older. Whenever I would ask momma about my father she would



say, "You see your brother Frank there? He was taller than him, he was brown skinned like me, and he was a very strong man." Now, I don't know if it's true, but momma once said my dad broke a mule's neck and killed it by hitting him with his fist, because the mule grew tired of plowing the fields. She also once told me he was a double-jointed man, and when I would inquire as to exactly what that meant, she'd just tell me to go wash the dishes up. She would tell me that my father loved her and he was a good provider, but he could be very mean when he wanted to be. I suppose because she was so young, liked to drink and dance in those days, he was a very jealous person. My Aunt Lillie said that my mother was 13 and that my father was in his 50s when they met. There's something definitely wrong with that I suppose. Folks say that my father wasn't a Sharecropper, but that he owned his own land and became quite wealthy. They said that everyone loved him and feared him, and even the white people in the early days feared him and left him alone.

I heard later that when my father Jim died, he left the land - his land - to my mother, but that she couldn't claim it for fear of getting killed. Some say he buried all of his money so momma wouldn't find it, and even some say he threw it in the river prior to his death. I'll never know, but maybe that's why momma never liked to talk about him much.

I always thought that I'd give a million dollars just to know what he looked like, even if I didn't know his personality, or if he never did anything for me, or even if I never knew his laugh... just to see his picture, which I never have, would be worth a million dollars to me.

I always felt strange growing up without a father, though I am glad Momma never remarried, although I did have other half-brothers. I never had the chance to sit on his knee, he never took me fishing, and he never took me to a baseball or basketball game like most fathers. Only once did my mother have to 'put me in line' when I spoke out about being fatherless.

As I grew older, I did become angry that my mother had to do everything for me. She had to teach me everything, she fought for me, she took me fishing. She had to take me fishing many times just to supplement our food intake. To this day I hate fishing! I think because I was forced to do it at a young age. I wish I could have fished when I was younger just as something for Dad and I to do together.

One day I spoke out to Momma about not having a dad like all the other kids in the neighborhood did... a dad that could take me places and do things with me. I guess you could say I could be an outspoken child, and on this particular day I told my Mom that if I ever found out where my Dad's grave was I would spit and piss on. I raved on and on about this, and finally my mother apparently had enough as she slapped

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me across the face. Mom could slap hard. I felt fire throughout my whole body. I cried and Mom cried. I distinctly remember she said, "Baby, you don't have a father... he died when you were just a baby."

I felt so sorry for Mother after that I had said. I asked her to please forgive me, and she did. To this day, though I never knew Dad, I still tell him that, "I love you."

We had the best house in Libron, Missouri. It was a strange feeling knowing that others in our neighborhood were jealous. I know the men around town were always chasing after my mom - maybe because of her looks, maybe because of our money. I think we were one of the wealthiest families in town. Frank, James, Stephen and my Mom worked all the time, and I stayed home and babysat the younger kids. We had a beautiful house and I loved it. We were lucky enough to have bicycles, and fresh block ice every day in the refrigerator. The neighbors were always dropping in to borrow or buy ice.

In the old storm cellar on the bottom floor, I remember that's where mom kept our money -- and at the time it sure seemed like a lot of money! The walls were lined with shelves full of flour, canned peaches, apple sauce, and Momma even canned watermelon rines. Those sure were delicious as she'd use lots of sugar, cook them for a long time, and then let them simmer most of the day. Mom even canned okra, mixed vegetables, and many things things I'd never even heard of. It's safe to say we never lacked food. It definitely helped that I had three older brothers that were old enough and strong enough to do manual labor.

Mom said it wasn't always 'the good days.' I can remember as a small child standing in the long soup lines and wondering from city to city, place to place.

I can remember vividly the commodity truck coming into the neighborhood to distribute goods such as eggs and dried fruit, and plums and peaches. I certainly loved the Kellogg's Corn Flakes and Coke-a-Cola. They seemed to be especially generous with us. Partly because of the number of children mom had, but I believe also because of her outgoing and friendly personality. I wish everyone could have known my mom. Over the years I heard so many people tell me that she was the best friend they'd ever had.

The Hare boys went to church every Sunday with their mom. As we never got sick, we never had a real excuse to get out of it. We'd get decked out in our suits and Stetson hats. Looking sharp as a tack, I know my mother was proud when she'd receive compliments on her sons.

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## 2 - OUR HOUSE: THE INFERNO

I have always realized I was a gifted child, but also always recognized the greatness of God Almighty. I often felt like it was my mother, Jesus, and me on our own after my brothers died in the terrible house fire of 19XX.

It seemed that after the fire, my remaining brothers changed, becoming cruel and insensitive to mom, to one another, and to life. I know they hurt like the rest of us.

My brother Stephen kind of reminded me of how my mother described my father. He was very big and had hands as big as a baseball glove it seemed. Stephen was somewhat of my protector. I remember him saying in a low, monotone voice to Frank or James when he'd catch them picking on me, "You better leave Freddie alone," and it always seemed to do the trick. He then would lift me up and put me on his shoulders, and I felt like I was riding a horse off into the sunset in victory. It was such a safe feeling being rescued each day.

All the boys would leave Ste Bo alone. They wouldn't give him grief, no retaliation, nothing. Stephen had a lighter complexion than me, and had some freckles around his nose and eyes.

Robert was about 4 years old when he was burned up in the fire. Robert had dark skin and a smooth complexion. Hair liken to soft velvet. He was very quiet, and in every meaning of the word was beautiful.

My brother Cornelius was brown skin, and beautiful as well. He was a touch livelier than Robert, but certainly not mischievous. During the fire he was next to the baby, Percy, who was rescued from the fire. Brother Percy was still in diapers, so young I wonder if the fire haunted him like it did me?

James was a pretty good son to my mother in those days, but I can remember that he was always up to something... and usually it was no good. He was a very likeable person, and I loved him so much! James and Frank, when not picking on me, would definitely protect me from those outside of the family.

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